

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for providing postal services to a plurality of remote postal printing stations, said system comprising:

a communications facility for conducting communications between said system and said remote postal printing stations; and

a plurality of services provided by said system to said remote stations when said remote stations access said system using said communications facility.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said services include at least one selected from the group consisting of:

a key management system;

a funds telemetering system;

a software updating system;

a postal rate updating system;

an address cleansing system;

a postal account management system; and

a postal statistics server system.

3. The system of claim 2, further comprising facilities for providing services other than postal services.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein said services other than postal services include at least one of printing

tickets to entertainment events and printing lottery tickets.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein said communications facility includes an interface for Internet communication and an interface for modem communication.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein said interface for internet communication includes a remote access server and a plurality of application programming interfaces.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising a monitor for determining when any service is being accessed, said monitor providing a signal to all other services that a service can be provided to said remote station.

8. The system of claim 1, in combination with at least one of said plurality of remote postal printing stations.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein each of said postal printing stations has a monitor for determining when any service is being accessed, said monitor providing a signal to all other services that a service can be provided to said remote station.

10. The system of claim 1, further comprising data encryption facilities, a different level of security being provided by said facilities for different ones of said services.

11. A method of operating a system for providing postal services to a plurality of remote postal printing stations, said method comprising:

using a communications facility for conducting communications between said system and said remote postal printing stations; and

using a plurality of services provided by said system to said remote stations when said remote stations access said system using said communications facility.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said services include at least one selected from the group consisting of:

- a key management process;
- a funds telemetering process;
- a software updating process;
- a postal rate updating process;
- an address cleansing process;
- a postal account management process; and
- a postal statistics acquisition process.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said system includes additional facilities for providing services other than postal services further comprising using said additional facilities for providing services other than postal services.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein said services other than postal services include at least one of printing tickets to entertainment events and printing lottery tickets.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein said communications facility includes an interface for Internet communication and an interface for modem communication, further comprising using at least one of said interfaces for communication.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein one of said interfaces is a default interface which is used first to attempt to establish communications and the other of said interfaces is a backup interface, used if said default system fails to establish communications.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein said interface for internet communication includes a remote access server and a plurality of application programming interfaces, further comprising using at least two of said application programming interfaces when communications have been established.

18. The method of claim 17, comprising using said plurality of application programming interfaces simultaneously.

19. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

using a monitor for determining when any service is being accessed, said monitor providing a signal to all other services that a service can be provided to said remote station; and

activating other services when the signal is received.

20. The method of claim 11, further comprising printing postage with at least one of said plurality of remote postal printing stations.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein each of said postal printing stations has a monitor for determining when any service is being accessed, said monitor providing a signal to all other services that a service can be

provided to said remote station, further comprising activating other services when the signal is received.

22. The method of claim 11, wherein said system further comprises data encryption facilities, the method further comprising using a different level of security for different ones of said services.

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